

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for storing, playing and downloading audio/video tracks, said apparatus comprising:
 - (a) means for connecting to a communications network;
 - (b) means for receiving, over said communications network, availability
 - 5 information identifying audio/video tracks that are available for purchase;
 - (c) means for displaying said availability information;
 - (d) means for inputting a user selection of an audio/video track from said availability information, so as to obtain a selected audio/video track;
 - (e) means for downloading the selected audio/video track over the
 - 10 communications network;
 - (f) means for storing the selected audio/video track downloaded by said means (e);
 - (g) means for reading the selected audio/video track from said means (f);
 - (h) means for playing the selected audio/video track read by said means
 - 15 (g) so as to generate an audio/video signal; and
 - (i) means for providing the audio/video signal generated by said means (h) to a home stereo system.
2. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the communications network is an Internet.
3. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said means (f) comprises a permanent storage device.
4. An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said means (f) comprises a hard disk drive.

5. An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the audio/video track downloaded by said means (e) is automatically stored by said means (f).

6. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said means (i) comprises a RCA jack.

7. An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising:

(j) means for displaying audio/video tracks available on said means (f), wherein said means (c) and said means (j) display tracks in a substantially identical manner.

8. An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising:

(j) means for allowing a user to navigate through said availability information.

9. An apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein said means (j) allows a user to navigate through said availability information based on different category types.

10. An apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein said means (j) also allows a user to navigate through said availability information based on different categories within said different category types.

11. An apparatus according to Claim 8, further comprising:

(k) means for displaying audio/video tracks available on said means (f);
and

(l) means for allowing a user to navigate through the tracks available on
5 said means (f),
wherein said means (j) and said means (l) permit navigation in a substantially identical manner.

12. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said means (d) comprises a wireless remote control.

13. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said means (f) stores the selected audio/video track in an encrypted format, and further comprising decryption means for decrypting the selected audio/video track.

14. An apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein said decryption means decrypts the selected audio/video track on-the-fly during playback by said means (h).

15. An apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein said decryption means decrypts the selected audio/video track using a decryption key that is uniquely associated with said apparatus.

16. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said apparatus is driven by software, and wherein user modification of the software driving said apparatus is limited to defined option choices.

17. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said means (c) comprises means for providing a video signal to a home television set.

18. An apparatus driven by software for storing, playing and downloading audio/video tracks, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) means for connecting to a communications network;
- (b) means for receiving, over said communications network, availability information identifying audio/video tracks that are available for purchase;
- (c) means for displaying said availability information;
- (d) means for inputting a user selection of an audio/video track from said availability information, so as to obtain a selected audio/video track;
- (e) means for downloading the selected audio/video track over the communications network;

- (f) means for storing the selected audio/video track downloaded by said means (e);
 - (g) means for reading the selected audio/video track from said means (f);
 - and
 - 15 (h) means for playing the selected audio/video track read by said means (g) so as to generate an audio/video signal,
- wherein user modification of the software driving said apparatus is limited to defined option choices.

19. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the communications network is an Internet.

20. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said means (f) comprises a permanent storage device.

21. An apparatus according to Claim 20, wherein said means (f) comprises a hard disk drive.

22. An apparatus according to Claim 20, wherein the audio/video track downloaded by said means (e) is automatically stored by said means (f).

23. An apparatus according to Claim 18, further comprising:
 (i) means for displaying audio/video tracks available on said means (f),
 wherein said means (c) and said means (i) display tracks in a substantially identical manner.

24. An apparatus according to Claim 18, further comprising:
 (i) means for allowing a user to navigate through said availability information.

25. An apparatus according to Claim 24, wherein said means (i) allows a user to navigate through said availability information based on different category types.

26. An apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein said means (i) also allows a user to navigate through said availability information based on different categories within said different category types.

27. An apparatus according to Claim 24, further comprising:

(j) means for displaying audio/video tracks available on said means (f);

and

(k) means for allowing a user to navigate through the tracks available on
5 said means (f),

wherein said means (i) and said means (k) permit navigation in a substantially identical manner.

28. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said means (d) comprises a wireless remote control.

29. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said means (f) stores the selected audio/video track in an encrypted format, and further comprising decryption means for decrypting the selected audio/video track.

30. An apparatus according to Claim 29, wherein said decryption means decrypts the selected audio/video track on-the-fly during playback by said means (h).

31. An apparatus according to Claim 29, wherein said decryption means decrypts the selected audio/video track using a decryption key that is uniquely associated with said apparatus.

32. An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said means (c) comprises means for providing a video signal to a home television set.

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